

Cold Spring Elementary School – DuFief Elementary School
Fallsmead Elementary School – Lakewood Elementary School
Stone Mill Elementary School – Travilah Elementary School
Cabin John Middle School – Robert Frost Middle School
Thomas S. Wootton High School

**Capital Improvement Program Testimony to
Montgomery County Council
By Junhua Liu, Sumeet Sharma, Vivian Xu, MCCPTA Wootton Cluster Coordinators
February 5, 2025**

Good evening, Councilmembers,

My name is **Joe**, and I stand before you as a **Wootton Cluster Coordinator** and a **deeply concerned community member**. Tonight, we demand **immediate action** to fund and accelerate long-overdue capital improvement projects for **Thomas S. Wootton High School, Cold Spring Elementary School, and DuFief Elementary School**.

For **far too long**, the Wootton cluster has been overlooked while other schools received much-needed renovations. **We have waited, we have followed the process, and yet our schools continue to deteriorate while MCPS delays our projects further.** This **pattern of neglect must stop**.

Thomas S. Wootton High School – A Community Betrayed

Let me be clear: **MCPS has failed the Wootton community.**

Wootton high school was first added in the CIP schedule in **2009** with completion set for **2018**. Fast forward **15 years**, and our students are still sitting in **the same crumbling building**—now with **no scheduled renovation date at all**.

Wootton is one of only two high schools in the county that has never undergone a major capital improvement. And now, instead of securing its long-overdue renovation, **it has been completely removed from the CIP schedule with a “TBD” status.** This is **unacceptable** and a **blatant disregard** for our students, teachers, and community.

The conditions inside Wootton High School are disgraceful:

- **A non-functioning HVAC system** and unsafe air ventilation, creating **an unhealthy learning environment**.
- **Leaking roofs and pipes** causing classroom disruptions and facility damage.
- **Antiquated electrical wiring and inadequate safety equipment** in science classrooms.
- **Broken and unsanitary bathrooms** posing **serious health risks** to students and staff.
- **Narrow hallways** that prevent students from getting to class on time.
- **A dangerously designed front driveway**, which has led to multiple safety incidents—including a **student suffering a concussion after being hit by a car** last year.

While we **appreciate the funding for ADA improvements**, these minor updates **do not** replace the **desperate need for a full renovation or rebuild**. A prime example: the school has **only two elevators**, one of which is

frequently broken. Imagine the daily **struggles** of students with disabilities just trying to navigate the building. **This is not equity.**

Beyond the **physical** conditions, Wootton's environment has led to **mental health concerns**. In the past year alone, Wootton has received **multiple bomb threats**. **Our students should not have to endure this.**

We **demand** that Wootton High School be reinstated into the CIP schedule **with a dedicated funding commitment** to move this project forward **immediately**.

To understand the severity of the conditions, we **formally invite all council members to visit Wootton High School** and experience firsthand **what our students and teachers go through every day**.

DuFief Elementary School – A Promise Broken

The situation at DuFief Elementary is equally frustrating. A **major expansion project** was previously **approved and scheduled** to address **overcrowding and critical repairs**—but then, it was **unexpectedly removed from the CIP list** a few years ago.

Since then, necessary **maintenance projects have been denied**, leaving students and staff to deal with **temporary band-aid fixes** while waiting for a promised project that never came.

While we **acknowledge the feasibility study recommendation**, we insist that this process be **accelerated and fully funded** with **clear action steps based on previous planning work**.

Cold Spring Elementary School – A Flawed Design That Must Be Addressed

We appreciate the **major capital project recommendation** for Cold Spring ES, but we emphasize that the feasibility study must include a **broad scope** to address its unique challenges, including:

- **The open classroom concept**, which negatively impacts learning by creating **excessive noise and distractions**.
- **Inadequate safety measures** during severe weather or emergencies.

Cold Spring must remain on the CIP list with a firm commitment to addressing these serious issues.

Robert Frost Middle School – Long Overdue for a Feasibility Study

Built in **1971**, Robert Frost Middle School has **never undergone a major renovation**. We request that it be **added to the list for a future feasibility study** to assess long-term infrastructure needs.

Conclusion – No More Delays, No More Excuses

For **too long**, Wootton cluster schools have been **pushed aside** while other projects move forward. **Years of delays and broken promises have left our schools in a state of disrepair. Enough is enough.**

Smart capital investments now will save the county money in the long run by preventing **further deterioration and costly emergency repairs**. Addressing these issues is **not just about fixing buildings—it's about ensuring safe, healthy, and equitable learning environments for our children**.

Montgomery County claims to uphold equity and inclusion—but actions speak louder than words. The Wootton community is **diverse**, with **12 % Black students, 12% Hispanic students, 29% white students, 40% Asian students.** The ongoing neglect of our schools **raises serious concerns about equitable treatment.** We **demand** the same investment and attention given to other clusters.

We **demand** your commitment to **fully funding our projects** through completion and **expediting** their timelines. **Our students cannot and should not have to wait any longer.**

Thank you.